

Sunderland City Council and South Tyneside Council

International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan

Habitat Regulations Assessment Stage 1 Screening - Statement to Inform

Publication Draft | August 2016



South Tyneside Council



ARUP

Sunderland City Council and South
Tyneside Council

**International Advanced
Manufacturing Park Area Action
Plan Area Action Plan**

Habitat Regulations Assessment
Stage 1 Screening - Statement to
Inform

This report takes into account the particular
instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied
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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the IAMP

1.1.1 The International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) proposal is for a 260,000sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA) development aimed primarily at the automotive, advanced manufacturing and related distribution sectors. Development of the IAMP will underpin the continued success of the automotive and advanced manufacturing sectors in the United Kingdom and North East of England. The North East of England is recognised internationally as a centre for the automotive industry, underpinned through the presence of Nissan who have been located in the region since 1985. This has led to the expansion of an ‘automotive cluster’ centred on the Nissan plant and companies linked to the Nissan supply chain.

1.1.2 The IAMP will be located on land to the north of the existing Nissan car manufacturing plant, to the west of the A19 and to the south of the A184. This location benefits from its close proximity to Nissan and excellent transport links with opportunities for integrated connectivity provided by the surrounding Strategic Road Network, rail and port infrastructure.

1.2 The IAMP Area Action Plan

1.2.1 The IAMP Area Action Plan (AAP) will guide future development and delivery of the IAMP.

1.2.2 This IAMP AAP will form part of the statutory development plans for Sunderland City Council (SCC) and South Tyneside Council (STC) (the Councils). The IAMP AAP has been prepared in partnership by both local authorities and reflects the joint working arrangements between both Councils. It should be read as a whole, alongside policies within the adopted and emerging Sunderland and South Tyneside Local Plans as these will continue to apply at the IAMP site, except where there is a site specific policy set out in the IAMP AAP.

1.2.3 The IAMP AAP is a Plan for the period of 15 years from adoption. It is anticipated that development will take place over a number of years in phases. A phasing strategy will be required as part of the DCO application with the phasing of development expected to reflect the aims of the IAMP AAP; helping to deliver the employment focus of the site. However, the key principle underpinning the delivery strategy for the IAMP is that infrastructure is put in place at the earliest possible opportunity with key mitigation measures prioritised.

1.2.4 It is the key document by which the vision and objectives of the IAMP will be achieved. The AAP sets out the planning policies to direct and enable the comprehensive delivery of a high quality employment development. The boundary of the AAP is shown in Appendix A and forms ‘the site’.

1.3 This Report

1.3.1 This report is the first stage of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process, a Statement to Inform the HRA Screening process for the proposed development (hereinafter referred to as ‘Statement to Inform’). The Statement to Inform has been prepared to identify the likely impacts of the IAMP AAP on European designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and to consider whether the impacts are likely to be significant. If likely significant effects are anticipated then a detailed ‘Appropriate Assessment’ stage of the HRA process will be required to be completed.

1.3.2 The report structure is as follows:

- Section 2 - The IAMP site;
- Section 3 - The IAMP AAP; and
- Section 4 - HRA Screening.

2 The IAMP Site

- 2.1** The IAMP is proposed to be located on land to the north of the existing Nissan car manufacturing plant, to the west of the A19 and to the south of the A184. This location benefits from its close proximity to Nissan and excellent transport links with opportunities for integrated connectivity provided by the surrounding Strategic Road Network, rail and port infrastructure.
- 2.2** The land within the AAP boundary (see Appendix A) is split between land in STC and SCC areas, and is predominately arable fields with small pockets of plantation and semi-natural woodland. Existing development is limited to mainly agricultural buildings which are distributed across the site along the A1290, off Downhill Lane and Follingsby Lane.
- 2.3** The North East Aircraft Museum is located in the southern part of the site next to the A1290 / Washington Road. The River Don, a tributary of the River Tyne, flows through the site in a west to east direction.
- 2.4** The site within the IAMP AAP boundary comprises a core development area of approximately 100 hectares; a safeguarded land area of approximately 50 hectares; and an additional environmental mitigation area of approximately 135 hectares.

3 The IAMP Area Action Plan

- 3.1** This IAMP AAP Publication document has been prepared to guide future comprehensive development of the land to the north of Nissan's existing car manufacturing plant, located within the administrative areas of Sunderland and South Tyneside.
- 3.2** The IAMP AAP is being prepared jointly by the Councils in support of the Sunderland City Deal (in partnership with South Tyneside).
- 3.3** The IAMP AAP is a plan for the next 15 years from adoption. It is the key document by which the vision and objectives of the IAMP will be achieved. The AAP sets out the planning policies to direct and enable the comprehensive delivery of a high quality employment development.
- 3.4** The sub-areas for the IAMP AAP include development areas to the north and south of the River Don, the ancillary commercial, leisure and transport centre known as 'the Hub' located in the southern part of the site; the extensive ecological and landscape mitigation zone; and the road, cycle and public rights of way networks across the AAP area.
- 3.5** The IAMP was designated by the Secretary of State as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in September 2015. That means that the IAMP can only be consented by a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008. The Councils intend to submit their application for a DCO during 2017.
- 3.6** This HRA Statement to Inform exercise is being carried out as part of the AAP preparation process in order to determine the need for a HRA in relation to the AAP.

4 HRA Screening – Statement to Inform

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This report is the first stage of the HRA process, a Statement to Inform the HRA Screening process for the AAP (hereinafter referred to as ‘Statement to Inform’). This Statement to Inform has been prepared to provide information for the ‘competent authority’, in this case the two Councils, regarding potential effects of the proposed AAP on protected European sites, as required by Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the ‘Habitat Regulations’)¹. It has been prepared in accordance with the Habitat Regulations.

4.2 The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Process

4.2.1 Regulation 61 of the Habitat Regulations requires a competent authority to make an ‘appropriate assessment’ of the implications of a plan or project for a European site in view of its conservation objectives, before deciding to undertake or give consent for a plan or project which (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site. In light of the conclusions of the assessment and subject to Regulation 62, the competent authority may proceed with or consent to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it would not adversely affect the integrity of the European site. Where the integrity of a site is, or has the potential to be, adversely affected, consent to a plan or project may still be granted where (1) it can be demonstrated that there are no alternative solutions to the project/plan that would have a lesser effect or avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s); and (2) the competent authority is satisfied that the plan/project is necessary for "imperative reasons of overriding public interest" ("IROPI"), e.g. human health, public safety, etc.

4.2.2 All plans and projects should identify any such possible effects early in the plan/project making process and then either alter the plan/project to avoid them or introduce mitigation measures to the point where no adverse effects occur. The competent authority is to agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it would not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned, (in the absence of IROPI) and, if appropriate, having obtained the opinion of the general public.

4.2.3 The assessment of a plan or project under the Habitat Regulations can be split into effectively four stages, comprising:

¹ Tyldesley, D. (2011), Assessing Projects under the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Competent Authorities. Bangor: Countryside Council for Wales.

- **Stage 1 – Screening:** This is the assessment of the likelihood of a plan or project having a significant effect on a European site or its features. This is the trigger for the need for an Appropriate Assessment as set out in Regulation 61(1). **This is the stage considered in this Statement to Inform;**
- **Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment:** This is the detailed consideration of the potential effects of the plan or project in relation to the conservation objectives for the European site to determine if there is likely to be an adverse effect on the integrity of the site (i.e. an effect that would compromise the site meeting its conservation objectives). Providing it can be demonstrated that with appropriate mitigation measures the plan or project would not give rise to an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, the plan or project can proceed;
- **Stage 3 - Consideration of Alternatives:** Where it cannot be demonstrated that the project would not give rise to an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, or there is scientific uncertainty, the assessment would need to consider if there were any other alternatives to the plan or project that would not give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of the European site; and
- **Stage 4 – IROPI:** If there are no alternatives, Stage 4 would then consider if there are any IROPI, and whether there were any compensatory measures that might be required.

4.2.4 This HRA Statement to Inform has therefore been prepared to identify the likely impacts of the IAMP AAP on local European sites.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 This Statement to Inform considers Stage 1 of the HRA Process, namely it examines the likelihood of the AAP having a significant effect on a European site or its features.

4.3.2 In order to understand the potential implications for European sites from the AAP, it is necessary to identify those sites that are located close to the scheme or provide a pathway(s) for effect on European sites. All European sites within 20km of the AAP plan area were identified, (the "Study Area"); outside of which it was determined that likely significant effects would not occur. This Study Area was determined by reference to ecological and construction effect features, such as species mobility distances and distance at which air and hydrological pollution events could have a significant effect.

4.3.3 Once these European sites and the pathway(s) for an effect(s) have been identified, they are investigated further through a desk study review. The ecological data available is then used to assess the likelihood of a significant effect(s) on the integrity of a European site.

4.3.4 The ecological data reviewed to inform Stage 1 of the HRA process comprises:

- Information on European designated sites available on the MAGIC website, which provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment from across Government²; and
- European Designated Site Data Sheets^{3,4,5}.

4.3.5 If any of the identified pathways of potential effects to the European sites from the AAP are considered likely to be significant, then the need for an Appropriate Assessment is triggered.

4.4 Findings

4.4.1 The AAP site does not have any European sites within the boundary. Three European sites are found within the Study Area that are considered relevant to the IAMP AAP. These sites and their qualifying features are summarised in the table below.

Figure 4.1: European designated sites within the Study Area.

Name	Status	Distance from site ⁶	Reason for designation
Northumbria Coast	SPA	~6km east	<p>ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC) During the breeding season the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) (Eastern Atlantic - breeding) 1.7% of the GB breeding population 5 year peak means 1992/3-1996/7 <p>ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC) Over winter the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) (Western Palearctic - wintering) 2.6% of the East Atlantic Flyway population 5 year peak means 1992/3-1996/7 • Purple sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) (Eastern Atlantic - wintering) 1.6% of the East Atlantic Flyway population 5 year peak means 1992/3-1996/7

² MAGIC Interactive Map. <http://www.magic.gov.uk/> Accessed 05 May 2016.

³ Joint Nature Conservation Committee: Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) Standard Data Form. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9006131.pdf> Accessed 05 May 2016.

⁴ Joint Nature Conservation Committee: Northumbria Coast Ramsar Information Sheet. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11049.pdf> Accessed 05 May 2016.

⁵ Joint Nature Conservation Committee: Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Standard Data Form. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/n2kforms/UK0030140.pdf> Accessed 05 May 2016.

⁶ Distances given shown the nearest point of the designated site to the proposed IAMP site.

Name	Status	Distance from site ⁶	Reason for designation
Durham Coast	SAC	~6.5km east	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts <p>The Durham Coast is the only example of vegetated sea cliffs on magnesian limestone exposures in the UK. These cliffs extend along the North Sea coast for over 20km from South Shields southwards to Blackhall Rocks. Their vegetation is unique in the British Isles and consists of a complex mosaic of paramaritime, mesotrophic and calcicolous grasslands, tall-herb fen, seepage flushes and wind-pruned scrub. Within these habitats rare species of contrasting phytogeographic distributions often grow together forming unusual and species-rich communities of high scientific interest. The communities present on the sea cliffs are largely maintained by natural processes including exposure to sea spray, erosion and slippage of the soft magnesian limestone bedrock and overlying glacial drifts, as well as localised flushing by calcareous water.</p>
Northumbria Coast	Ramsar	~6km east	<p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site supports internationally important wintering populations of turnstone and purple sandpiper.

4.4.2 Maps showing the location of each of these sites in relation to the proposed IAMP AAP can be found in Appendix B of this report, as follows:

- Northumbria Coast SPA, Appendix B1;
- Durham Coast SAC, Appendix B2; and
- Northumbria Coast Ramsar site, Appendix B3.

4.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

4.5.1 The Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Northumbria Coast Ramsar sites are approximately 6km east of the proposed IAMP site to which the AAP is relevant to. During the breeding season, the SPA regularly supports little tern which has an unfavourable conservation status in Europe. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) cites little tern as a ‘strictly coastal species’ that breeds along beaches⁷. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) also state that little tern nest exclusively on the coast and do not forage far from their breeding site which ‘dictates a necessity for breeding close to shallow, sheltered feeding areas where

⁷ RSPB (2016), Little tern, <https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/l/littletern/>. Accessed 12th May 2016.

they can easily locate the variety of small fish and invertebrates that make up their diet⁸.

- 4.5.2** Both the SPA and Ramsar also support wintering populations of turnstone and purple sandpiper. Turnstone are also a coastal species with a preferred habitat of rocky, sandy and muddy shores. Turnstone feed on rocks covered in seaweed and will feed along seawalls and jetties⁹. During migration, turnstone can be found inland. However, as they prefer habitats near water, this is likely to be along lake shores or near marsh ground¹⁰.
- 4.5.3** Purple sandpiper is mainly a winter visitor to rocky coastal areas of the UK. They are most commonly found around piers and groynes, as well as on stony beaches and mussel beds at low tide. Their diet consists of winkles, insects, spiders, crustaceans and plants¹¹. Given the preferred habitats and foraging grounds of the little tern, ruddy turnstone and purple sandpiper, it is unlikely that any of these designated species would utilise the proposed IAMP site as it is largely arable land.
- 4.5.4** None of the three bird species have been recorded within 2km of the AAP site previously¹².
- 4.5.5** The Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is approximately 6.5km east of the proposed IAMP site to which the AAP is relevant to. The SAC is designated due to the presence of vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts which is an Annex I habitat. The proposed IAMP site has no ecological connectivity with the Durham Coast SAC via groundwater, rivers or habitats.
- 4.5.6** For heavy industrial activities that require an operational permit from the Environment Agency, an assessment of air quality impacts on designated sites within 10km is required as part of the HRA process. Air quality impacts from new roads or roads which experience a large change in traffic as the result of a development within 200m of designated sites also require assessment. However, the proposed IAMP development to which the AAP is relevant is not a heavy industry development and no new roads will be built and no roads which would experience a large change in traffic will be within 200m of any designated sites.

⁸ JNCC (2016), Little tern *Sternula albifrons*, <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2897>. Accessed 12th May 2016.

⁹ RSPB (2016), Turnstone, <http://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/t/turnstone/>. Accessed 12th May 2016.

¹⁰ Wildscreen Arkive (2016), Ruddy turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), <http://www.arkive.org/ruddy-turnstone/arenaria-interpres/>. Accessed 12th May 2016.

¹¹ RSPB (2016), Purple sandpiper, <https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/birdguide/name/p/purplesandpiper/>. Accessed 12th May 2016.

¹² Durham Bird Club, 2012. The Birds of Durham, edited by Bowey and Newsome, Durham Bird Club.

4.5.7 The construction within the AAP area would give rise to disturbance effects such as noise, earth movements, dust, and vehicle emissions. Similarly, during the operation of a scheme within the AAP area there would be an increase in noise and human activities. It is however, considered extremely unlikely that any such construction or operational effects could potentially impact the bird species associated with the European designated sites.

4.6 In-combination impacts

4.6.1 Highways England are currently progressing a scheme to upgrade and improve the A19 Testos Roundabout and the associated Downhill Lane junction to the south. This is immediately adjacent to the IAMP AAP area, and similar arable and grassland habitats may be subject to landtake. It is not considered that in-combination impacts would occur, due to the separation distance to the European designated sites, and the lack of ecological connectivity to the AAP site, and in the case of the three key bird species the lack of suitable habitat.

4.7 Conclusion

4.7.1 The proposed IAMP AAP is not considered likely to have any direct or indirect impact on European designated sites due to its distance from these; the proposed operational activities at the site; the nature of habitats present; and the designated features.

4.7.2 Notably, the species of European importance for which Northumbria Coast SPA and Ramsar is designated are unlikely to use the habitats present within the proposed IAMP site and they have not been recorded during any bird surveys to date¹³. Given that the proposed development will not consist of any residential development it is unlikely that there will be any impacts upon European designated sites through an increase in visitor numbers. Construction effect features, such as species mobility distances and the distance at which air and hydrological pollution events will have a significant effect, are not considered to be an issue with regard to this development and these designated sites.

4.7.3 The proposed IAMP site has no ecological connectivity with the Durham Coast SAC via groundwater, rivers or habitats, and no impacts are anticipated.

4.7.4 Consideration of the policies in the IAMP AAP indicates that all likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on European Sites within the zone of influence of the AAP area, have been avoided. The AAP provides an appropriate framework for future development of the IAMP whilst avoiding the potential for likely significant effects on European Sites. There is therefore no requirement for the HRA process to further consider potential effects of the IAMP AAP on

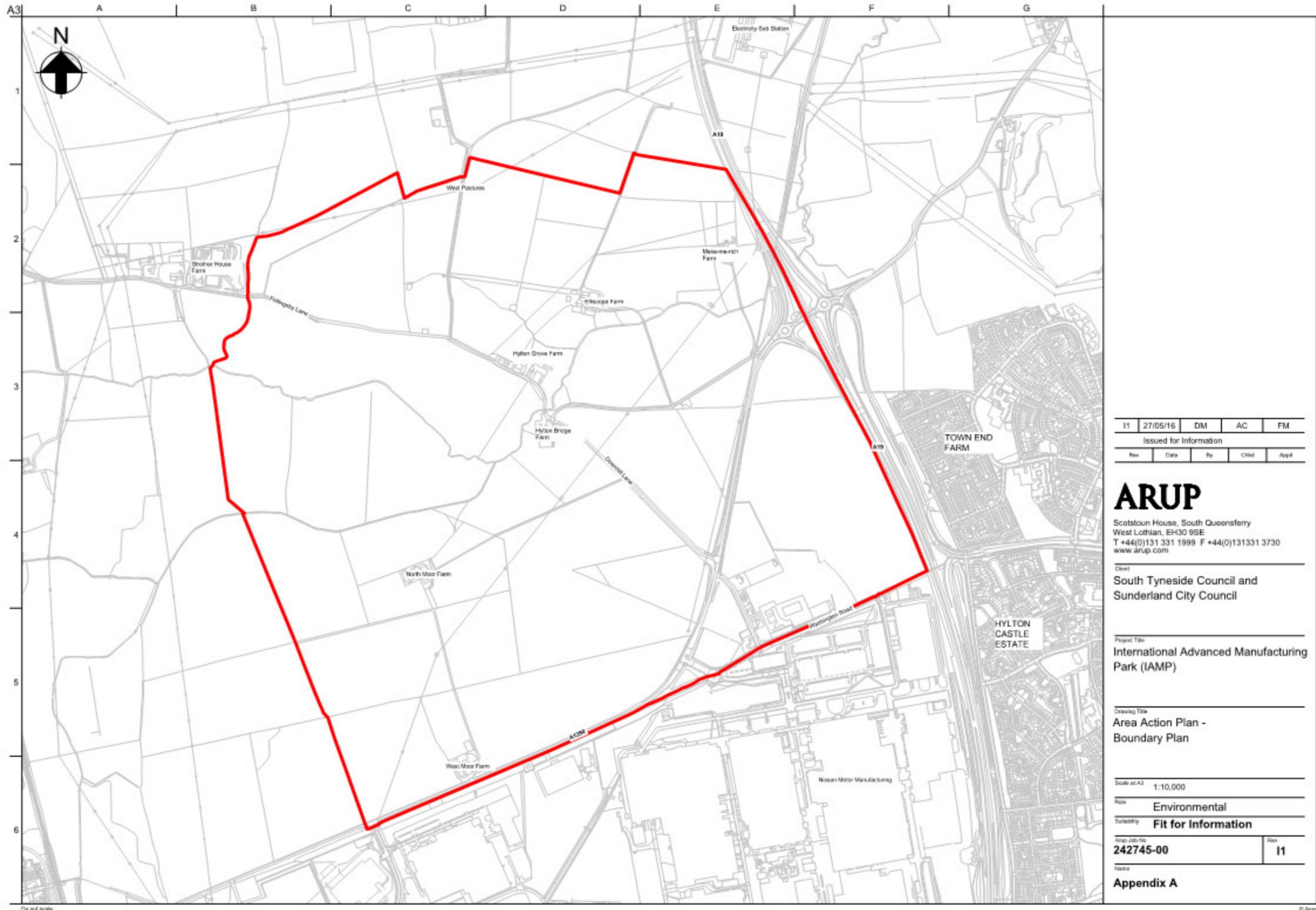
¹³ White Young Green (2015), Land North of Nissan: Final Report.

European Sites. As a result of this, there is no need for an Appropriate Assessment.

4.7.5 SCC and STC will use this Statement to Inform as the competent authority to ascertain whether they agree that the AAP will not adversely affect the integrity of the sites concerned.

Appendix A

Area Action Plan – Boundary Plan



11	27/05/16	DM	AC	FM
Issued for Information				
Rev	Date	By	CHKD	Appl

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Client
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Project Title
International Advanced Manufacturing
Park (IAMP)

Drawing Title
Area Action Plan -
Boundary Plan

Scale at A3 1:10,000

Role Environmental

Suitability Fit for Information

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Notes
Appendix A

Do not scale

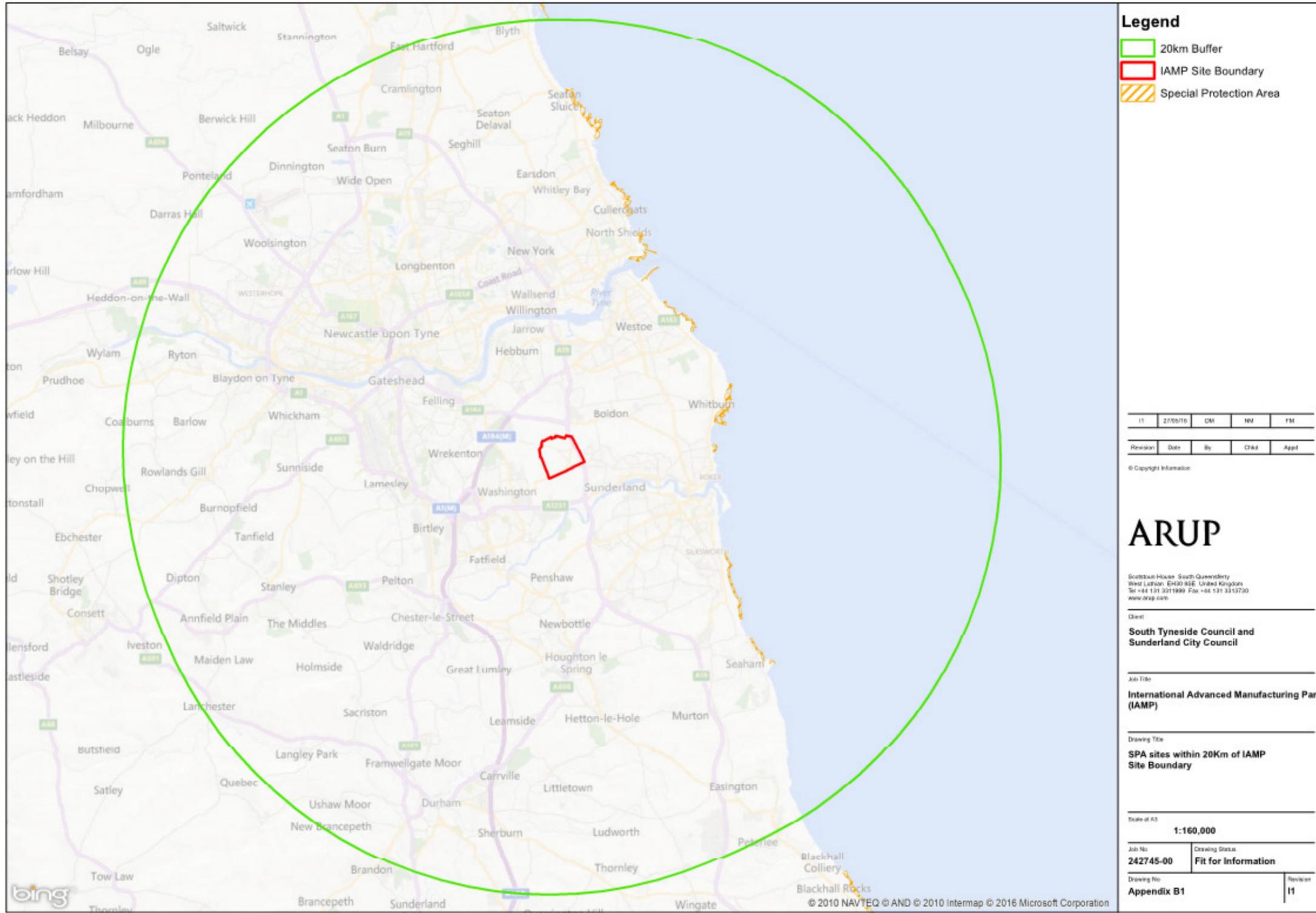
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Appendix B

Maps of European Designated Sites

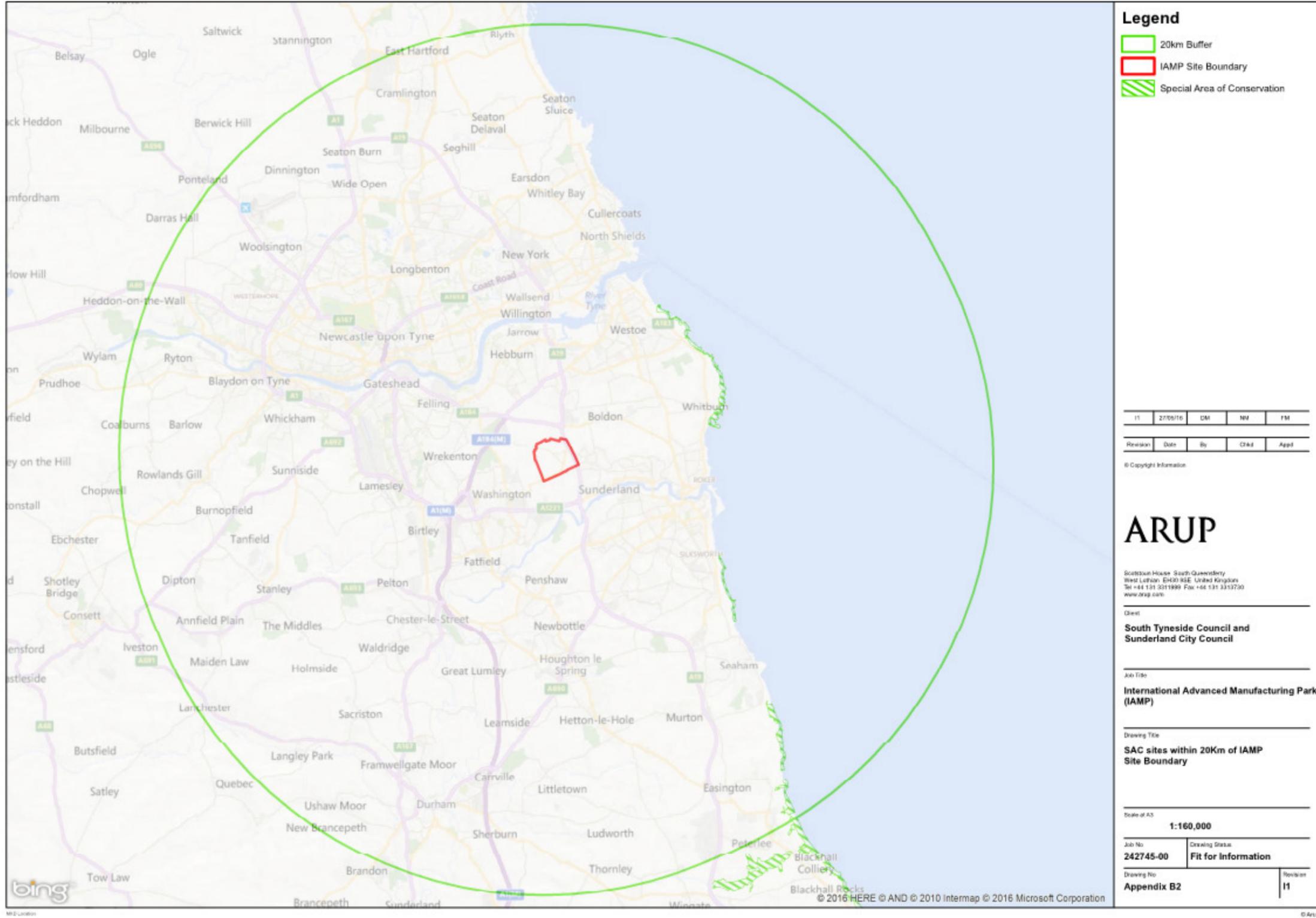
B1 Northumbria Coast SPA

A3



B2 Durham Coast SAC

A3



B3 Northumbria Coast Ramsar

A3

